

A LETTER  
TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE EARL OF LIVERPOOL,  
ON  
THE CLAIMS  
OF THE  
*ROMAN CATHOLICS.*

---

BY A TRAITOR.

---

LONDON :  
PRINTED FOR J. J. STOCKDALE,  
NO. 41, PALL MALL.  
1813.

*Price Two Shillings.*

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

Figures, Printer, 14, Fork Street,  
Cirencester Garden, London.

TO  
*THE EARL OF LIVERPOOL,*

*&c. &c. &c.*

---

MY LORD ;

So much has already been said and written on the Catholic Question, that the subject is generally supposed to be exhausted ; and every fresh attempt on either side, to convince and bring over those of opposite opinions respecting it, is considered only a repetition of stale arguments, dressed up with a little variety, according to the fancy and genius of the particular writer or speaker.

Speeches on the subject now pass in a manner unheard, and publications moulder in the booksellers' warehouses.

Under such discouraging circumstances, it may almost seem fruitless to offer any observa-

tions : but I flatter myself, that by addressing your Lordship, I may possibly gain a patient reading, and I rest my hope of biassing your sentiments, not so much on the novelty of the arguments, as on the strength of facts which I trust I shall produce.

Should they succeed in influencing you, a great point will be gained to the cause ; for, although it may be professed or intended, that when the question is again brought forward, each individual ranging with the Ministry, should vote impartially according to his own opinion, yet I cannot suppose that the known sentiments of the head of an Administration will not have some weight, or that, in the present state of affairs, either side will entirely separate this subject from party views.

Having explained my motives for thus addressing your Lordship in particular ; I shall proceed to the examination of the question, first, as to the right on which the present Claims on behalf of the Roman Catholics are founded, and next as to the effects which they may be expected to produce, if granted : I shall then draw such conclusions as the subject and times appear to me to justify.

Since these Claims relate more immediately

to Ireland than to the rest of the British dominions, in order to inquire into the right on which they are founded, I shall trace out so much of the history of that country as relates to the past and present religious tenets of its inhabitants.

It will, however, perhaps be said, that whether we refer to traditional accounts, the legends of historical bards, or the writings of monks, which are the principal early authorities; the fictions, with which they so much abound, impeach in a great measure their veracity.

But after clearing away the parts evidently fabulous, and so common to ancient history in general, enough is established by concurrent testimonies to prove at least all that can be material to my present purpose.

It appears that the Britons and Hibernians were of Celtic origin, and professed the same religion, which abounded in superstition and idolatry.

In the commencement of the fifth century Christianity was introduced into Ireland; and about this time, Patrick, who certainly professed a different faith from that which is generally attributed to him, founded the Irish

Church. He appears to have been born in North Britain, and after passing his early days in Ireland, to have travelled for many years on the Continent.

Having been ordained a priest at Tours, and resided some time at Rome, he returned to Ireland about the year 432, at the age of sixty years, to endeavour to convert the inhabitants.

The feeble attempts which were then making to propagate Christianity, were stifled amidst contending factions; for the history of Ireland till this period furnishes but one continued relation of sanguinary conflicts, partly with foreign nations, but more in struggles for superiority between provincial kings.

The mild and persuasive manners, persevering zeal, and unaffected piety of Patrick, appear to have calmed for a time their animosities, and opened the way for the reception of his doctrine.

Having acquired a knowledge of the Irish language, he succeeded in converting the country, province by province — caused churches and religious houses to be erected, instituted an order of Clergy, and founded schools for learning.

In the erection of the Primacy of Armagh

(which he is said to have possessed for some time), as well as in the rest of his conduct, Patrick appears to have acted like a man whose authority was derived, not from any power delegated to him, but from his own zeal; nor did the Christians of that age pretend to any other.

At last, worn down by the infirmities of extreme old age, and having appointed a successor; he went into retirement, in which he died at the advanced period of an hundred and twenty years.

From this beginning, the Irish Church continued for a time to prosper, and learning to increase and flourish; but the peace of it was disturbed by a renewal of civil as well as foreign contests. At length, about the middle of the ninth century, the Danes having gained an ascendancy, religion was suppressed, churches were demolished, and learning was almost banished from the country.

Before the close, however, of the same century, the island was rescued from the Danes; religion and learning began to revive, churches were repaired, and schools re-established.

The accounts of the state of religion and learning in Ireland during the tenth century,

are, perhaps, less certain than in the former period; but no wonder—for broils continued to distract the country.

It nevertheless is sufficiently clear, that the Irish were not at all under the authority of the See of Rome during that period, and that they differed from her respecting the time of celebrating Easter, and other particulars.

During the eleventh century, the Roman Church seems to have gained some footing in part of Ireland, as a legate from the Pope was established at Limerick, and the regular succession of the clergy, who had heretofore been ordained in Ireland, was interrupted.

It was in this period, indeed, that the first attempt to invest the Pope with the sovereignty of Ireland was made; but it was done by one who had himself no power. Donough, the son of Bryan, having been subdued amidst the civil wars, and driven from his country, sought shelter on the Continent, and hoping to profit himself by the act, surrendered the kingdom of Ireland to the Pope. The people, however, were not then prepared to accept such a sovereign, and it does not appear that they acknowledged, or the Pope himself assumed, the authority.

It is nevertheless probable that this was the cause of the Legate being sent to Ireland with the hope of gaining power for the Pope.

As a new era of church government commences in the twelfth century, it may not be improper in this place to quote what was said on the subject about fifty years ago, by a writer of Irish history\*, who had not only consulted preceding historians, but the most ancient records also. He speaks thus of the Irish Church and its founder:—

“Although this Bishop (Patrick) was probably consecrated at Rome, and is said by all writers to have been sent into Ireland by Pope Celestine, yet there are no traces of any commission, no instructions from his Holiness, nor the pretence of any model of church government to be met with. It is evident, however, that the religion which he introduced into that island, and which was professed by all the ancient bishops, priests, and monks, and their disciples, as to the chief points of doctrine, was in substance the same with the religion established at this day.

“Hence it follows, that the reformation of

---

\* Warner.

the Church of Ireland was so far from being liable to the objection of introducing novelties, that it only removed those errors and changes which had crept into it, both in doctrine and worship, through ignorance and superstition.

“The use of the Holy Scriptures was so far from being forbidden to the laity, that it was recommended and enjoined as every Christian’s duty. The place of Purgatory, and prayers for the dead, were never heard of till the twelfth century.

“They held image-worship as abominable; and by a canon of St. Patrick, no creature is to be sworn by but the Creator alone.

“Their infants were baptized without the consecrated chrism, which is laid to their charge by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, so late as the eleventh century.—The celibacy of the Clergy was a doctrine so unknown in the Church of Ireland, that Innocent the Third, in the twelfth century, sent express directions to his legate to abolish the use prevailing there ‘of sons and grandsons succeeding their fathers and grandfathers in their ecclesiastical benefices.’”

Many instances have been brought by Archbishop Usher, to prove that the Sacrament was

anciently administered in both kinds to the people, and the cup not withheld from the laity; nor was the Mass any thing more than the public service of the Church, even when prayers only were said, without the celebration of the Communion. As to the Liturgy, there was no uniformity at all observed about it; but several forms of public service were used in different parts of the kingdom, till the Roman use was brought in, at the request of all the Clergy, in the beginning of the twelfth century.

In the twelfth century, then, the Irish Church appears in a different character; but so little was it before considered conformable or subject to the See of Rome, that Pope Adrian urged Henry the Second to invade the country, "that he might enlarge the borders of the Church." From this time the doctrines and government of the Church of Ireland became entirely changed; the See of Rome had spread far and wide the authority and tenets which she had assumed; they had been yielded to and embraced by the English, and from them received by the Irish; and the two countries persevered in the superstitions they had thus adopted, till aroused from them by the Reformation.

The history of the *Reformed Church* may be said to be nearly the same in the two islands, except in this lamentable particular, that in one it has been cherished and preserved much less than in the other. Irish churches in ruins, numerous parishes without a place of worship for members of the reformed religion, or a resident pastor to instruct the inhabitants in it; and these evils, still further extended by the uniting of benefices, are no less a reproach to the country in which they have so long existed, than to Great Britain itself. Can it be supposed, that but for this, the nation would now be distracted by the momentous question which at this time agitates its councils?

That many bright examples of learning, piety, and zeal, have adorned the Reformed Church of Ireland, is true; but I speak of the general state of it, and although some exertions may in this age be making to strengthen and support it, yet the negligence of centuries has shaken it to the very centre.

I have thus traced the general history of the Church of Ireland, from its foundation early in the fifth century, in the true principles of primitive Christianity, until its apostacy during the twelfth century, to the authority

which the Church of Rome had assumed, and from thence to the time of its renouncing the errors which it had adopted, and of its establishment in the reformed religion in which it continues at the present day.

It is therefore necessary that I should next inquire into the existing tenets of those who advance the present Claims as their rights.

For this purpose, I will not travel out of the high road to ask what principles the Church of Rome itself now professes. This might be deemed unfair and erroneous. I will therefore rather seek to accomplish what I propose, in a more certain and ready manner, by looking into the doctrines and forms of worship, together with the explanation and instructions given respecting them and promulgated by the Roman Catholic pastors of Ireland, as they are found in the books in most common use among the people.

Those to which I shall chiefly refer, are "The Poor Man's Manual" and "The Garden of the Soul." The latter (which contains an attestation that it is published by the authority of the Ordinary) begins with the articles of faith professed by them; and under the title of "*What every Christian must believe,*" it is asserted, that the Catholic (the Roman Catholic)

Church derives her doctrine, her communion, her orders, and her mission, by an uninterrupted succession from the Apostles of Christ ; that with her the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, were deposited by the Apostles ; that she is, in her pastors, the *guardian and interpreter of them, and judge of all controversies respecting them* ; that the Scriptures, thus interpreted, together with the traditions of the Apostles, are to be admitted by all Christians for the rule of their faith and practice.

In the succeeding pages of the same work it fully appears how the Scriptures are interpreted by the Irish Roman Catholic pastors, who thus hold themselves the guardians and interpreters of them, and the judges of all controversies respecting them.

Therein will be found their extravagant doctrines concerning confirmation, transubstantiation, penance, extreme unction, and purgatory, their prayers to saints and guardian angels, the Virgin Mary, and the heart of our blessed Redeemer.

Prefixed to one prayer is this recommendation, that it “ possesses such remarkable properties as to obtain a good death to any person who says it once a day, and many other benefits.”

It is declared, that those who perform another service may have a plenary indulgence at “any one time of life they please to pitch on, or at the hour of death;” also, that by repeating certain acts of devotion once a day, and by praying for the extirpation of heresy and the exaltation of the Catholic Church, a plenary indulgence may be obtained by virtue of the power given by Pope Benedict the Thirteenth, in the year 1728, which was confirmed by Benedict the Fourteenth, 1756, who further granted the application of it *for the relief of souls in purgatory*; and that Clement the Fourteenth, in 1772, made this indulgence perpetual to the Catholics of Ireland.

Hence a general idea may be gained of the faith and doctrine of the present Roman Catholics of Ireland; and I would now ask, whereon they found the rights of those Claims which they are making?

Do they rest them on the plea that such were the tenets of the ancient Church of Ireland? or that Patrick, acknowledged by others to have been the great founder of it, and by them canonized as their titular saint, preached such faith and doctrine, or that he professed to derive from the See of Rome such power as they pretend to?

Authentic history bears testimony in contra-

diction to such an assertion, and it clearly appears, that the Popes had not, in the time of Patrick, assumed such doctrine and authority.

If they pretend not to derive the right of these Claims from the ancient Church of Ireland, is it from any race of Roman Catholic kings that it receives its sanction?

But where does history record this? or whence does it furnish any plea for it before the invasion of Ireland by Henry the Second? for till that time, the princes and people of Ireland had scarcely received any of the superstitions, or submitted at all to the authority of the Church of Rome.

Thus, then, there does not appear to be real authority for saying that the present Claims are founded on any rights, either of the Church or State of Ireland.

I shall now proceed to inquire abstractly, whether the prosperity of the Roman Catholics of Ireland would be promoted by the granting of their Claims?

The abject and deplorable state of the peasantry of Ireland, together with the want of industry and exertion in agriculture and manufactures, is a fact which no person who has any knowledge of them can attempt to deny; and it is equally notorious, that these evils exist in

a much greater degree in those parts of the country where the Roman Catholics most abound.

These evils are ascribed to the laws which exclude the higher classes of them from partaking in the government of the country ; it is affirmed, that, being thus prevented from attaining to the greatest offices and dignities, a total inertness pervades all ranks, and they consequently sit down in useless inactivity.

But has the Roman Catholic religion nothing to do with the depressed condition of the country ? does it not greatly tend to promote these calamities ? Most certainly it does, and I will point out how it operates in this respect.

Since it is acknowledged that the riches of a country arise from the quantity of labour performed by its inhabitants, and that the affluence of different ranks grows out of this first cause, I shall begin by shewing in how great a degree the general amount of labour is interrupted, and the poor Roman Catholic workman himself depressed in circumstances, body, and mind, by his religion.

Not a week in the Roman calendar of Ireland but contains some days dedicated to their saints. Many of these days are enjoined to

be kept holy; and the labourer, during them, must forego the regular work by which he gains his daily bread. On some of these, as well as other fixed days, he must likewise abstain from nutritive food.

Whoever has lived among the Irish, well knows that these injunctions are rigorously enforced by the Roman Catholic pastors of Ireland, even to such an excess, that if the latter part of any week happens to abound with fixed holidays, the labourer who tills the ground must refrain from work, even though he may have been prevented from performing any during the former part of the week by the inclemency of the weather.

The different restrictions which he is under, tend alike to check his active labour; for he is enjoined at one time not to partake of strengthening food, if he can obtain it, and at another, he is precluded from gaining the means to purchase a sufficiency for his sustenance.

The frequent repetition of holidays leads him to a habit of idleness, and it is with reluctance that he again returns to labour; this habit in time becomes fixed, and he is able to indulge in this indolence, from having learnt, during the prescribed days of abstinence, to subsist on scanty food.

It is true that he may escape from some of these strict injunctions imposed upon him, by obtaining dispensations and indulgences. Yes,—if he pays part of the money which he has to purchase food with, his priest can permit him, although it be a fast-day, to eat what the remainder will procure;—if he gives up part of the earnings of his labour, his priest can also suffer him to work, notwithstanding it may be a holiday dedicated to some saint.

But these are not the only demands which tend to keep him in poverty; there are others which still further debase him in circumstances and in mind.

Has he without permission broken through any of the rules enjoined him?—he must buy absolution for the crime: does his conscience inform him that he has in any way offended his Maker?—instead of humbly imploring forgiveness of that Almighty and invisible Being, who is alone able to pardon; he must purchase it of his priest, to whom he is to prostrate himself and confess his sins; for the priest has derived the power of pardoning them from the Pope, and the Pope (as the Roman Catholic is taught to believe) has been vested with it from God!

Thus led to adore the creature instead of the Creator, he in all things conforms to the dictates of his priest, and lavishes his bounty on him, with the hope of purchasing a place in Heaven.

I am drawing no imaginary picture, but giving a strict relation of facts.

It is notorious, that such is the veneration in which the Irish labourer holds his pastor, that he will toil gratuitously in tilling his land for him, whilst his own potatoe-garden lies uncultivated.

The offerings, also, made to the priest after the marriage ceremony, by the assembled friends of the parties, sometimes amount to a sum exceeding in value the fee-simple of the miserable cabin of which they are only tenants.

So strict are the pastors in enforcing their demands, that even the extreme unction\*, that last hope to which the Roman Catholic clings, is denied in cases where the poverty of those who require it is such as to prevent their paying for its being performed.

---

\* "Extreme unction, which wipes away the relics of sin, and arms the soul with the grace of God in time of sickness."  
—See 9th article of Roman Catholic Faith; Manual of the Garden of the Soul, page 18.

Other Roman Catholic countries furnish proofs that the poverty and depression of their inhabitants are caused by the religion itself, even those in which it is not only tolerated, but encouraged in the highest degree, by being the established religion, and the professors of it having full possession of all the privileges and powers of the government. In none has this been carried to a greater extent than in Spain and Portugal, and (I speak not of their present calamities) in them has the same inactivity, the same poverty and wretchedness of the peasantry existed to as great a degree as in Ireland.

Since, then, it clearly appears that the Roman Catholic religion itself produces these effects, surely the granting of the present Claims would not tend to promote the happiness and prosperity of those for whom they are made; but, by giving support to that religion, would extend the existing calamities.

I shall now turn from these two points, that the present Claims are rights, and that, if granted, they would prove beneficial to the Roman Catholic Irish themselves, since neither of those assertions appears to be true, as I have endeavoured to shew; and will now take a more general view of the subject, to see how far it

would be possible to allow these Claims without endangering the British Constitution.

I have already given some account of the foundation of the Irish Church, and, for the purpose of shewing how far that of England has become interwoven with the constitution and government of the country, I shall likewise give a brief sketch of the history of the English Church. The primitive Church of Ireland was founded, as I have already shewn, in the fifth century, and therefore was more ancient than that of England; for although there seems good authority\* for supposing that Christianity was preached, in the very first ages, and even by some of the immediate Apostles of our Saviour, in both these British Islands, yet it had not become established.

Mention is indeed made, that, when Patrick founded the Irish Church, he crossed over to Britain, where he met with some pious men, thirty of whom he ordained and took with him to Ireland to assist in his work. But it nevertheless appears, that in the next century Christianity had made no progress in England till it was propagated by Augustin the Monk. At

---

\*See Usher.

this date, therefore, the English Church may be said to have been founded. It was begun, however, under different auspices from that of Ireland; for the doctrines of the Church of Rome, although not arrived at that degree of superstition to which they afterwards attained, were yet by no means so pure in the time of Gregory, who sent over Augustin, as when Patrick resided at Rome during the time of Celestine.

The Church of England, thus founded, was greatly suppressed by the ravages of the Danes, who made the same conquests in that island which they did in Ireland; but it revived under the great Alfred, during the tenth century.

After his reign, the Church of England, even before the Conquest, had become somewhat tainted with Popish superstitions; and when William the Conqueror gained possession of the country in the eleventh century, the doctrines of the See of Rome (which by that time had grown still more corrupt and diffused over that part of the continent whence he and his followers came) were fully received by the English. Yet it appears, that although this prince was the first who acknowledged an express Legate from the Pope to England, he

nevertheless preserved to himself the chief authority over the ecclesiastical as well as civil affairs.

From the time of William the authority of the See of Rome gained much more ascendancy in England; and at length Henry the Second, great as he was in some affairs, submitted to Popish sway.

I have already observed, in speaking of the Irish Church, that this king was prompted by Pope Adrian to invade Ireland, in order to enlarge the borders of the Church; and that with him was introduced into that country, the high degree of superstition and submission to the Pope's authority which then so fully reigned in England.

From this time, not only the established Churches of the two islands, but the government also became subject to the haughty and persecuting dominion of the Church of Rome, till the Reformation in England, during the sixteenth century, opened the way for liberating them from this yoke which had so long stood in the way of national as well as individual happiness and prosperity.

It is not to be wondered that the government and people, when they had begun to enjoy their

liberties under the more mild and tolerant doctrines and liberal views of the Reformed Church, united with the state, should wish to cement that union by the firmest bonds, and to guard against a return of the former oppression under which they had been suffering.

Various laws were therefore enacted to restrain the power of those who still entertained the principles of that religion which had been productive of such calamities to the country; and to secure to the members of the Reformed Church the possession of the most public trusts.

To accomplish this purpose, a code of penal laws was framed against the Roman Catholics; but this system was too severe to be long acted upon, and in time happily gave way to one founded on more mild and just principles, and therefore more likely to produce the good effects at which it aimed.

After the restoration of Charles the Second to the Crown, in order (as the great Judge Blackstone says) the better to secure the Established Church against perils from non-conformists of all denominations; two bulwarks were erected, called the Corporation and Test Acts; the former of these obliging all persons, before they could be legally admitted into the

government of any city or corporation, to give proof of their faith in the doctrines of the reformed religion, by receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the rites of the Established Church of England; and also in-joining them to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy at the same time that they take the oath of office.

The other Act requires the like tests to be given by all officers civil and military, within six months after their admission, under a penalty and disability to hold the office or appointment.

Although two branches of the Legislature, with their immediate dependencies, as well as some offices emanating from the King, had thus been prevented from supporting the late extravagant religious principles from which the nation had suffered so much, or from favouring any new and innovating doctrines which might in future arise; yet it afterwards appeared that something was wanting to complete this wise plan.

The reign of James the Second proved how great danger might occur to the community from a King who favoured the Roman Catholic doctrines, and it therefore became expedient

to secure the throne being filled by such princes only as entertained the faith of the Established Church. This was happily accomplished by the Act of Settlement at the Revolution, and not only by the accession of a Protestant branch of the regal family, but also by the wording of those parts of the coronation oath which might admit of doubtful interpretation, so as to bind the King, in the most sacred manner, to preserve the Protestant reformed religion, with all the privileges and laws by which it was established and secured.

Whatever might be wanting to render this system of laws for preserving the union of the Church and State, not only just, but liberal, was effected by the Toleration Act, which, as the great writer on jurisprudence, whom I have before quoted, says, “has indulged tender consciences with every religious liberty consistent with the safety of the State.”\*

---

\* Respecting the justice of toleration, as well as of keeping up a proper restraint for the safety of the State, he elsewhere speaks thus:—“If, through weakness of intellect, through misdirected piety, through perverseness and acerbity of temper, or (which is often the case) through a prospect of secular advantage in herding with a party, men quarrel with the Ecclesiastical Establishment, the civil magistrate has nothing to do with it, unless their tenets

These salutary laws having thus produced a government, which, whilst it is constituted of a union of the Established Church with every branch of our triple state, nevertheless allows liberty of conscience and freedom of worship to those of every religious persuasion; the work of legislation has been considered to be brought as nearly to perfection as any human institution is capable of.

Our ancestors have watched and guarded them with the most jealous care, and, through these laws, under the blessing of Providence, we have hitherto enjoyed civil and religious liberty to such a degree as should call forth the gratitude of every subject, be his faith and doctrines what they may.

Our Church has been respected even by most of those who dissent from it, for its mild and tolerant principles; our Government has gained the highest rank among nations for its

---

and practice are such as threaten ruin or disturbance to the State.

“He is bound indeed to protect the Established Church; and if this can be better effected by admitting none but its genuine members to offices of trust and emolument, he is certainly at liberty to do so; the disposal of offices being matter of favour and discretion.”

*Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. iv. page 58.*

good faith and liberal views; our merchants have become pre-eminent, both at home and abroad; for fair and honourable dealings; and thus our individual and national prosperity, raised to the highest pitch, has rendered our free and glorious Constitution the pride of Britons and the envy of the world.

The present Claims of the Roman Catholics tend to break in upon this code of laws which has produced such happy effects; and to interrupt the order and harmony of the entire system.

The work of levelling so begun, must eventually destroy the fabric which has been produced by the wisdom of ages.

From this view of the subject, it might almost seem superfluous to make any further observations respecting it; yet I cannot but consider it necessary to notice some other arguments which have been brought forward in support of the Roman Catholic Claims, not only on account of the matter, but the temper of them; and I deem it the more important to do so, from the probability that similar arguments will be used when the question is again discussed, since it appears that the cause is to be advocated, for the most part, by the same persons as before.

The first class of these arguments consists of those which assert the Claims to be *rights*.

I trust that I have already shewn that this right is not derived in consequence of those, for whom the Claims are demanded, professing the faith and doctrines of the most ancient Irish Christian Church, or from any era of it which can truly give such a right; as the history of both islands, connected with the Church, fully demonstrates.

Hence it also follows, that the assertion is unfounded, which declares the Roman Catholics to be unfairly excluded from their rights, whilst they are but exercising the religion of their forefathers; for on what plea can this be made, unless indeed they renounce their most ancient Christian ancestors, and fix on those of a particular age, whose religious tenets best agree with their own, and thus date their Christian origin from the time of Henry the Second in the twelfth century, rather than trace it to the fifth.

It is yet further asserted, that the numbers of the Roman Catholics give them a right to what they claim; that it is not only an act of injustice, but a violation of their rights, to exclude so many inhabitants of the country from the powers and privileges of the government.

I trust, however, that it will be admitted that other States besides this have deemed it proper to have a fixed Church Establishment, blended with, and supported by the government of the country; and they have been guided to it by the experience, that, when persons of different religions are mixed together in making and administering the laws, their jarring opinions throw the community into confusion.

For the same reason the British Constitution, though by more mild and tolerant laws, has prevented those who differ from the Established Church from being admitted into the powers of the government.

Thus every argument in favour of the *right* of these demands, is, I hope, answered; unless it be said that the loud and frequent repetition of them confer this right.

If such doctrine as this is to be admitted, the most violent and dissatisfied members of a community would at all times have greater rights than the peaceable and contented.

Another kind of reasoning used in favour of these Claims is, that although the general custom of nations has been to have some fixed religion united with their government, yet a people may nevertheless be as happy and prosperous,

and enjoy greater freedom, by a more enlarged plan of throwing the state open to those of all religious persuasions. For the example we must take a modern nation, America. She has done so; and what has it produced?—such a wildness in religion; such a multiplicity of sects; that it has become difficult to find names for them, and liberty has run mad.

Judging from the state at which America has already arrived, has this system caused harmony and good order among her subjects? Are her merchants renowned for fair and honourable dealings, and good faith towards their foreign connexions?

Is there any thing so wise in her councils, liberal in her views, or just in her measures, as a nation, that we should wish to imitate her?

Had America followed the example of her Parent State, by establishing the Christian Church on the just principles of toleration, and interwoven it with her constitution; it is but reasonable to suppose that, like Britain, she would now be aiding other countries to preserve their independence, instead of having sold herself (as one of her truly wise patriots has said) to the present tyrant and destroyer of mankind, to work his work, by assisting to enslave other nations, and forge her own chains.

I have already shewn, by examples from Ireland, Spain, and Portugal, to what an abject and deplorable state a people are brought by the Roman Catholic religion, constituted as it is of superstition and intolerant principles; and I would now shew, what a state of frenzied liberty, infidelity and idolatry the disgust occasioned by it has produced, by referring to the late Revolution in France, when the nation was brought to such a height of these extravagancies, that the members of its councils crowned their other impious acts by going in a body to renounce the true God, and prostrated themselves before a harlot, deified as the Goddess of Reason.

France and America furnish two memorable proofs of the opposite extremes in matters of Religion, and shew that superstition, and intolerant doctrines in the one, and an unrestrained admission of all sects into the administration of state-affairs in the other, produce the like licentiousness in the people.

Happy, thrice happy, then, should the inhabitants of the British Isles be, whose government has steered a middle course by establishing a pure and tolerant Religion united with the State;—may they properly value, and long

preserve, the blessings which they so largely enjoy !

But to return to the arguments used in favour of the Roman Catholic Claims.

It is further said, that the danger of granting them is removed or sufficiently lessened, because by the Roman Catholics mixing with Protestants their sentiments are softened.

If, by living among Protestants, their doctrines are indeed so far meliorated, that they renounce the fundamental tenets of them, and abjure the errors and superstitions of Popery, then, truly, their sentiments are softened; but persons so altered are no longer Roman Catholics.

I have already shewn by extracts from their publications, that those who profess the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland, hold the same articles of faith which they ever did.

The first and most dangerous of these, is the asserted supremacy of the Pope, combined with the divine right of pardoning sins. The acknowledgment of the Romish Clergy and their flocks that he possesses this prerogative, is alone sufficient to make their doctrines dangerous.

If the power of pardoning sins were assumed for the Pope only, the evil effects arising from it would but extend to a limited circle; but, since those of the Roman Catholic Communion insist that he is enabled to grant the same power generally to their Clergy, this doctrine must ever make the Popish tenets formidable to the state of all Protestant countries which possess a mixture of Roman Catholic inhabitants.

Most of the other superstitions attached to their religion, grow out of this first principle of the Popish doctrine.

This gives the plea for granting indulgences and dispensations, for the non-observance of fasts and saints days, and absolution for offences committed against the laws of God and man. This forms the foundation, and the other superstitions are only the props of the Roman Catholic religion; take away but this power of pardoning sins, and the whole fabric falls to the ground; but suffer it to remain, and it matters not whether the professors of such tenets do, or do not, deny the existence of any other temporal authority of the Pope; for through this power he may gain it, and all former dangers will stand as firmly as ever.

Will any thinking and impartial man say,

that there is no danger to a state, from the adherents of a religion, which acknowledges the priesthood to have the power of pardoning sins and selling absolution? Does no peril exist to the government of this country, composed of a Protestant Church, established and united with the state, if its Roman Catholic subjects are to be admitted into power, when they have been told of late\*, that so recently as the year 1772, the Pope confirmed the power of granting indulgences, to all those in Ireland, who pray for the extirpation of what they call heresy, (which, according to their acceptation of the word, means whatever faith differs from their own,) and for the exaltation† of the (Roman) Catholic Church?

Is there likewise no danger to the interests of the Established Church, from the Irish Roman Catholic clergy, when they inform their flock, among other things, “you are to pay tithes to *our* pastor?”

Has this pronoun no poison lurking under it?—If it has not, I must learn to read and construe anew.

---

\* Garden of the Soul, page 353.

† Poor Man's Manual, page 17.

Surely then, with all these proofs to the contrary, we are not to be reasoned into the belief, that there would be no danger in granting the present Claims.

Again, those who so warmly urge these Claims, say, that there may be some danger in allowing the Roman Catholics *much* power, but give them something more than they now have, with certain privileges, which will satisfy them, and the danger in such cases will be far less than their present hostility; besides, you can take securities against their encroachments in state-affairs.

But do the Roman Catholics themselves say that they will be so satisfied?—no—nor would I believe them if they did.

How short a time has elapsed since the elective franchise was granted to them, because it was stated to be unjust to withhold from them the power of choosing those who should represent them in the House of Commons, although they themselves were not permitted to sit there. See, already, in what a dictatorial manner they have insisted that those of their communion should elect representatives of one class of opinions only.

No sooner was the elective franchise granted,

than it was declared to be unjust to deny their being represented by persons who entertain the principles of their own religion. Let but this also be allowed, and we shall soon hear that it is equally unfair to prevent their Bishops (who in Ireland are now as numerous as those of the Established Church, and soon would be so in England) from sitting in the Upper House ; grant this also, and why not sometimes have a Roman Catholic Lord Chancellor, and next, a Roman Catholic King ?

He knows little of mankind who supposes that those who are extravagant in their demands will be satisfied with part only.

Another plea is, that it is highly unjust to deny the Roman Catholics power and privileges in the state, whilst there are soldiers of that faith in the army of the nation, fighting its battles, and shedding their blood, as it is asserted, for the cause of the Established Church.

Yet surely this class of subjects, although from prudence denied powers and privileges in the government of the country, have notwithstanding some stake in it, which it is their duty and interest to defend.

A great stress is also laid on the injustice of their being debarred from rising to high rank

in the army. Much as the necessity of this restriction is to be lamented, it is indispensable for the security of the government that it should be strictly adhered to; since the history of other countries as well as our own, proves that armies will sometimes act according to the views of their leaders, which may be at variance with the interests of the state.

Neither is the restraint in this case different from what that great bulwark of our constitution the Test-Act generally enjoins; and I have already quoted Judge Blackstone, to shew that offices and powers, civil or military, may with strict justice be withheld, if the safety of the state requires it.

After the arguments on justice, follows one about inconsistency. The British Government is charged with inconsistency, because, whilst it denies these Claims to its own Roman Catholic subjects, it is fighting for the support of that religion in Spain and Portugal. The answer to such a charge is simple and clear.

Whatever construction you put upon it, our nation is aiding the cause of suffering humanity.

We see our neighbour's land unjustly invaded; his property snatched from him; his children

torn from his grasp—violated and butchered before his face; his home possessed by merciless invaders, and himself turned out naked and perishing. We ask him not of what Church he is, whether it is Romish, Greek, or any other; but with the true spirit of Christianity we stretch forth our hands to help him, and, as far as in us lies, pour balm into his wounds.

One more of the arguments brought forward in favour of these Claims, and I have done with them.

The Pope is said to be so down-fallen, and with him the power of the Roman Catholic religion, that it can never again become dangerous to a Protestant state; therefore grant these people all they ask, put an end to the strife, and be quiet.

That the present Pope himself is greatly humbled, must be admitted; but what is there that should prevent the office from being granted to one who possesses greater temporal power, and who will use it for his own base ends, and become more than ever the scourge and terror of mankind?

Judging from all which has passed in our days, can there be any certainty that the present dynasty of the Popes (to use the cant phrase) may not be changed?

Notwithstanding the Popes are said to derive the authority of pardoning sins from on high, yet it seems that the Cardinals have the power of vesting it in whom they please. Is it then impossible that even Buonaparte himself may find Cardinals who would elect him, and that he may yet sit in the papal chair?

Such a thing is neither impossible nor improbable, for it has even been rumoured, and we know full well, that rumours of this kind have of late been soon followed by deeds.

Were he but once vested, though by whatever means, with all the prerogatives ascribed to Popes, it would soon be seen what use he would make of pardoning sins, and how many persons, both civil and ecclesiastical, he would bring to acknowledge his papal authority. Would there then prove no danger to the British Islands, from the Claims of the Roman Catholics having been granted. Even the humbled state or death of Buonaparte, would give no security against such an evil; for now, or in future, another, and another like him, may arise, and Popery is a powerful engine ready for the hands of any tyrant.

With all these dangers staring us in the face, what securities can be given in granting the

present Claims?—none—it is but mockery to talk of them.

Having replied to the arguments, I have now only to remark on the temper with which they have been delivered.

The opponents of these measures are accused of being illiberal when they recur to the former grievances which the Protestants have endured from the Roman Catholics, and bring back the recollection of those times which they say ought to be buried in oblivion. But those who assume the name of patriots, and among whom are to be found many of the assertors of the Roman Catholic Claims, would do well to call to mind that they are incessantly exclaiming—Remember our Hampdens, and Sidneys, and the great cause for which they bled.

Are the names of Rogers and Hooper, of Cranmer, of Ridley and Latimer, to be erased from our memory? Is it to be forgotten how they and many others with patience and fortitude endured the flame;

“ And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake,

“ Enjoyed the show and danced about the stake.”

Are we to suppose it impossible that such scenes should occur again? God forbid that they ever should, but we must perform our

parts and guard against it in the best manner we are able.

The smallness of the number of the Roman Catholics, is no security to trust to in admitting them into the powers of the government, for “a lion may die from the puncture of an asp.”

The good nature and candour of those who oppose these Claims are next challenged.

This weapon, I believe, has ever proved a destructive one. Should it now prevail, what a contrast would the two passages in history form,—the one recording those times, when our forefathers stood firm in the cause of the Protestant religion amidst the most cruel tortures ; the other describing the present times, when professed members and guardians of that Church, rather than have their good-nature questioned, and because forsooth this is called a *liberal* and *enlightened* age, surrendered all the securities of the British constitution !

More perhaps is to be dreaded in these days from the cause being yielded in consequence of good nature and indifference, than from open threats.

Threats are justly considered as the characteristics of a weak cause, and threats have been

used in this;—yes, it has been asserted, that the Roman Catholic Claims must be granted, that the refusal of them will no longer be endured, and that ere long perhaps violent means will enforce them.

Those who use such language may with truth be told, that Ireland, above all countries, has suffered from the measures of those who have been called her patriots.

Their constant but unfounded clamour about oppression has, at all times, inflamed the minds of its inhabitants, rendered them discontented, and enslaved those liberal sentiments and measures, to which they are by nature prone, and which alone can promote the wealth and advancement of a country.

Let those then who advocate her cause, when they urge the present, or any other Claims, use all the just arguments and honourable means they can: but if they value the happiness and prosperity of their country; if they possess one spark of genuine patriotism, they will not toss fire-brands.

Should, however, such bold and menacing language be again resorted to, I am persuaded that your Lordship will not be intimidated, but that with true British courage, you will

nail the colours to the mast, and never make a base surrender of them.

Such statutes against the Roman Catholics as were contrary to the true spirit of British laws, have wisely and justly been removed; but the garrison of the constitution have now retired within the keep; open but the door to a few, and the multitude will rush in and destroy the citadel.

Your great and worthy predecessor, who was lately torn from his country by violent hands, set a noble example of firmness in this cause.

He was loaded, indeed, with such reproaches of obstinacy, bigotry, and intolerance, that an infuriated mob, taught to think that he had betrayed the best interests of his country, shouted with savage joy at the tidings of his assassination; but now that the phrenzy of the moment has passed, all, even his opponents, admit that he has left a name

“ Which every breath to heaven shall bear

“ Both men to speak, and angels joy to hear.

As you revere his memory you will follow his steps. For your exertions, my Lord, in the present struggle, the nation now looks with anxious expectation.

The guidance of affairs has been placed in your hands, and the people of the United Kingdom have done their part towards supporting you. Whilst this momentous question is pending, they have returned a majority of representatives, who favour your administration, confidently trusting that it is composed of men who are distinctly determined to maintain, in all its vigour, the British Constitution in Church and State.

A fuller test of their sentiments they could not give ; a greater pledge they could not place in the hands of any one, than they have in your Lordship's.

That you will endeavour to direct this strength for the purpose for which they designed it, I, for one, fully rely ; and I pray God to support you with firmness and ability to execute it.

But what measures am I urging, and in what terms ;—such, indeed, as are so foreign to modern ideas of patriotism, that I can only expect to be considered by many, though not by your Lordship,

A TRAITOR.

FINIS.